Social security pact with Belgium

1090. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed social security pact with Belgium regarding protection of rights of Non-Resident Indian Workers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the pact would be signed with other countries also especially the Gulf countries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (e) A bilateral agreement on Social Security was signed with Belgium on 3rd November 2006. The agreement provides for the following benefits to Indians working in Belgium.

(i) Those working on a short-term contract of up to sixty months will be exempted from social security contributions under the Belgian law provided they continue to make social security payments in India.

(ii) Those who live and work in Belgium for periods longer than sixty months and contribute under the Belgian law will be entitled to the export of the social security benefits should they relocate to India or a third country on completion of their contract or on retirement.

(iii) These benefits will also be available to Indian employees sent by an Indian company to Belgium from a third country.

(iv) Self-employed Indians in Belgium contributing to the Belgian social security system will be entitled to the export of social security benefits should they choose to relocate to India or a third country.

(v) Periods of employment in both the countries will be considered in order to determine the adminissibility and the quantum of pension.

(vi) Indian companies will become more competitive in Belgium since exemption from social security contribution in respect of their employees substantially reduces costs.

Government has intitiated the process for negotiating similar agreement with the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Germany, Norway and Bulgaria. The Gulf countries, unlike Belgium, have no compulsory social security tax mandated by law. As such, there is neither a demand nor a proposal to sign such agreements with the Gulf countries. However, bilateral Memoranda of Understanding on labour are being signed with the Gulf countries.

Indian medical practitioners in Britain

1091. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH;

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large number of medical practitioners of Indian origin who moved to Britain in 1970s and 1980s following job offer in that country to meet shortage of medicial professionals at that time, are now being forced to come back consequent upon the adverse High Court decision ruling that refused a judicial review of changes in U.K. immigration Rules;

(b) if so, the number of Indian Medical practitioners in Britain who are facing hardships at present; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (c) The British Government has implemented new immigration and employment regulations on 7th March, 2006, under which all non-EU doctors will hereafter require a work permit to work in the UK. However, work permit will be given against specific vacancies for which suitable UK/ EU doctors are not available. The new regulations abolished the Permit-Free Training (PFT) category through which most Indian Medicial Graduates (IMG) worked in the UK. The new regulations were confirmed by an order of the British High Court on 9th February, 2007. The Indian High Commission had taken up with the Government of UK the issue of allowing the Indian